

THE
Connecticut Common School Journal
AND
ANNALS OF EDUCATION.

VOL. II.

NEW BRITAIN, AUGUST, 1855.

No. 8.

ANNUAL REPORT,

*Of the Superintendent of Common Schools to the General Assembly,
May Session, 1855. (Continued from page 333.)*

ATTENDANCE.

I regret that it is not in my power to lay before you exact statistical information respecting the attendance of pupils at our public schools. Scarcely any item of information is more important than this as the means of determining the actual working of our system of public instruction. For this purpose it is desirable to know how the whole number of scholars registered compares with the number enumerated; the average number in daily attendance; and the ratio of the average attendance to the number entered upon the register. This can be attained with reliable accuracy only by a uniform, system of registers carefully kept by teachers, and a regular and uniform system of returns from school-visitors to this office. Plans for the accomplishment of this object will be submitted under another head.

Where good school-houses have been provided, and good teachers employed, the attendance, so far as I have been able to learn, has been excellent. In some instances the number of pupils enrolled has come quite up to the enumeration, while the average daily attendance has reached from ninety to ninety-six per cent. Such schools, however, are the exceptions. There is good reason for the conclusion that non-attendance is one of the greatest evils in our schools, and one which deserves the most serious attention. In a large proportion of the reports and returns received from school visitors, this is made a prominent

nent subject of complaint. This is a defect which can not be corrected directly and at once. As school-houses become improved and attractive, and teachers are better qualified for their business, and parents take a deeper interest in the education of their children, it will gradually disappear. If, however, there is a class of parents sunk so low in the depths of degradation, as knowingly and willingly to deprive their offspring of the advantages of education, and leave them a prey to ignorance, vice and crime, thus training them up not in the way they should go, but as candidates for our penitentiaries,—such parents, if such there be, should be reached by the strong arm of the law.

Among the causes of non-attendance and irregularity of attendance, there is one which demands immediate attention. I refer to the present system of

RATE BILLS.

In Section 63 of the "Act concerning Education," it is provided that "Whenever the expense of keeping a common school by a teacher or teachers duly qualified, shall exceed the amount of all moneys provided to defray the expenses of such school, the committee may examine, adjust and allow all bills of expense incurred for the support of said school, and assess the same upon the parents, guardians and masters of such children as attended the same, according to the number and time sent by each."

I can not but regard this as the most objectionable feature in our school law. I am convinced that this rate-bill system operates most unfavorably upon the interests of our schools. This law makes the amount to be paid for each child depend upon the number of days he attends school. Consequently, every day a child is kept out of school there is so much the less to pay. Upon the children of the poor and the penurious, this arrangement operates directly as a premium on non-attendance. When it is apprehended that the rate-bill will be high, in consequence of employing a teacher of higher qualifications, or of keeping the school open for a longer time than usual, many can not or will not send at all, then the burden must fall still more heavily upon those who do send, and with them the inducement to keep their children out a part of the time is proportionally increased. The following cases, which recently came to my knowledge, may serve to illustrate the working of this law. A poor widow, residing near one of the best schools in the State, has several children, and being unable to keep them all in school at the same time for want of means to pay the rate-bill, she is

compelled to resort to the expedient of sending one at a time. In another village, where an excellent graded school has been established, a bright boy was found spending his time in the streets. When asked the cause of his wasting his time in idleness, he replied, with eyes filled with tears,

"I wish to go to school, but can not because my father is too poor to pay the rate-bill."

I have been informed that in those districts where the rate-bill has been abolished, a marked improvement in the attendance has been the result, especially among the children of foreign parentage, the very class which ought to be brought into our common schools, if we would fit them for the discharge of the duties of American citizens.

My predecessor, in his report to the Legislature as Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools, in 1839, speaks of this provision of the law in the following language:

"It is difficult to frame a law to operate more unfavorably, unequal-
ly, and in many instances, more oppressively than this. Owing to the
reliance now placed on the public funds—to the almost entire abandon-
ment of property taxation,—for the support of schools, it leaves the
question of the continuance of a school beyond what the public moneys
will pay for, to be decided under the most unfavorable circumstances.
There is not only the ordinary pecuniary interest to decide against it,
but it is increased from the fact that all the abatements for poor chil-
dren must come upon them who send to the schools. This, in many in-
stances, if the school is continued a suitable period, as far as the good
of the children is concerned, makes the school-bills nearly equal to
what they would be if their children were in private schools. Again,
many of them who are thus required to pay the bills of their poorer
neighbors, are just able to pay their own, and the addition of a single
penny beyond that, is oppressive, so long as its burden is not shared by
the whole community.

"Again, it is an inducement to parents to keep their children at
home, on any trifling demand for their services—for, in so doing, there
is no pecuniary loss sustained; as, on the other hand, their school-bill
is by so much diminished.

"The unequal operation of the present mode of continuing the
schools becomes more oppressive as private schools increase—and a lar-
ger number of the wealthier members of society withdraw from the
public schools. It thus throws all the extra expense of the schools, as
far as the poor are concerned, upon that class, who, either from public-
spirited, or other motives, send their children to the common schools.

"As to this portion of our school law, I have found but one opinion prevailing among the most intelligent men practically acquainted with the working of it; that it is radically defective. Instead of having within itself a principle of interest, which, by its ever-recurring pressure, keeps the sensibility of every individual alive to the subject, without oppressing any, it now operates not for the benefit of the poor, for they remain unaffected by it any way, but to encourage men of property to withdraw children from school, and throw the burden of supporting the schools upon those least able to bear it."

It is now sixteen years since the disastrous operation of this law was thus truthfully portrayed. What shall be its fate in 1855 is for your wisdom to determine.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PUBLIC MONEY.

is another subject which deserves consideration in connection with that of attendance.

As the law now stands, (Sec. 51,) the income of the school fund is "distributed among the several school societies, in proportion to the number of persons between four and sixteen years of age;" and school societies (Sec. 59) may distribute this public money to the school districts "either in proportion to the number of persons between the ages of four and sixteen, in such districts, or to the number of persons who shall have attended the common school or some schools in said district during the year preceding."

The former mode of distribution is adopted in nearly all the societies. The latter, that is according to the actual attendance, was tried last year in the society of Thompson, with the most satisfactory results. If the law should be so modified as to make the *average attendance* the basis of distribution, instead of the number of persons between the ages of four and sixteen, it would doubtless operate as a powerful stimulus to the teacher, pupils and parents of each district to secure a full attendance. Besides, this method of distribution would be more just, as there are several districts which draw considerable sums from the public funds, on the enumeration of the children of foreigners who receive no benefit from common schools, either being in schools of their own or attending no school whatever.

Another point in connection with the distribution of public money is deserving of attention. Sec. 59 of the "Act concerning Education" provides that the public money shall be divided among the societies *pro*

rata, and whenever the public money derived from the school fund, will not amount, according to the rule of distribution, to thirty-five dollars for a district in any one year, the school society to which such district belongs, shall grant and allow out of said school money, to such district, so much as will give said district the sum of thirty-five dollars, in case there are not less than twelve children in said district between the ages of four and sixteen."

An act passed in 1852, in amendment to Sec. 59, cited above, makes it the duty of the Comptroller of public accounts and the Commissioner of the School Fund, before proceeding to make the *pro rata* distribution to the societies, to ascertain what districts and in what societies are entitled as above to the sum of thirty-five dollars, and to distribute to each school society the sum of thirty-five dollars for every such district therein situated, and the remainder of the public money is to be distributed to the districts *pro rata*, or according to the number of pupils enumerated. This year, it requires twenty-eight scholars in a district to entitle it by the *pro rata* rule of distribution to thirty-five dollars; consequently all districts containing more than eleven and less than twenty-eight pupils, received the sum of thirty-five dollars. The whole number of districts within these limits is 429. These districts receive \$15,015. The whole number of scholars in these districts is 8,865. Each scholar therefore receives nearly \$1.70, whereas in other districts each scholar receives \$1.25.

It may admit of question, whether this law is not a violation of that provision in the constitution which expressly ordains that the interest of the school fund "shall be appropriated to the equal benefit of all the people of the State."

However its constitutional bearing or its justice may be regarded, it is obvious that its effect is to encourage the division and subdivision of districts. It sometimes happens that a few factious individuals, in a district, if displeased with the action of the majority, in locating or building a school-house, or in introducing other improvements, will petition to be set off in a district by themselves, and by intrigue and management, carry their point. They are not unfrequently encouraged in these movements by this guaranty of thirty-five dollars. In such a district, though there may not be more than twelve scholars, a sum is received equal to the next one though it numbers twenty-eight.

If in your judgment there is some question as to the constitutionality and justice of this law, and it is found to favor the multiplication of small districts, the remedy is in your hands.

SMALL DISTRICTS.

There are 45 districts in the State with less than 12 children. To this class of districts the public money is distributed *pro rata*, as it is to those with more than 27 children. Each receives from the school fund less than \$15. If the revenue of the town deposit fund and the avails of the one per cent. tax are divided upon the same principle, the extent of the means realized from all these sources annually, for the maintenance of a school, in any of these districts, would not exceed \$25. The average would fall considerably below the sum; probably to \$18. To eke out this scanty allowance, the teacher may be "boarded around," and a rate-bill levied on the attendance. It is quite obvious that all these resources united are utterly inadequate for the support of a good school for a sufficient length of time. For these schools, a cheap teacher is almost invariably sought, and almost as invariably a *poor* teacher is employed; at any rate, a *very poor* teacher or one *quite inexperienced*; and even the unprofitable services of these incompetent teachers must be speedily terminated. Few of these schools are kept more than four months in the year, the period required by law in order to be entitled to the public money. Nothing can be more certain than that the children residing in such districts, do not stand an equal chance for obtaining a good education, with those who belong to larger and more populous districts. The disparity, indeed, between the school privileges generally enjoyed by the children of these districts, and those provided for the children in some of our best schools, is immense. This vast inequality of advantages for education ought not to be tolerated in a State which early adopted and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the duty of government to provide for the instruction of our youth.

Several of these districts within my personal knowledge, ought to be immediately annexed to contiguous districts from which they were unwiseiy severed. If there are any so unfortunately located as to render such a remedy impracticable, some provision should be made in addition to that now existing, to enable them to keep better schools, and for a longer period. The objections to the policy of granting them an extra allowance from the public money, have already been alluded to in speaking of the existing system of aiding the class of small districts immediately above this now under consideration.

The true policy to be pursued with reference to small districts, for the best good of all, seems to be this: to discourage the organization of new ones; to consolidate old ones when it can be done; and to aid and

foster those which it is necessary to retain. This is the policy. The next thing to consider, is the proper means of carrying it out. It is obvious that the remedy should be applied to the *source* of the evil. The societies have the power to make and unmake districts. If the societies were required by law to divide the interest of the town deposit fund, or the one per cent. tax, or both, equally among the districts, with certain exceptions, without regard to the number of children belonging in them, a strong interest would at once be created in the societies in favor of consolidating small districts, and adverse to the setting off of new ones, while it would at the same time give to those which are permitted to remain, the requisite means of maintaining a suitable school.

For a list of the districts with less than 12 children, and other statistical information respecting districts, see Appendix.

I have said that one of the evils resulting from the limited means of small districts, is to reduce to the mere legal limit the length of schools.

LENGTH OF SCHOOLS.

The law wisely makes it a condition, that each district shall keep a legal school for at least four months in each year, in order to entitle it to receive its share of public money. Most districts have been accustomed to rely mainly upon the public funds for the support of their schools. The amount received by a majority of the districts is scarcely sufficient to defray the expenses of a good school for the prescribed period of four months, even when contribution is made to pay the board of the teacher; consequently, in such districts it is common to close the term of the public school, as soon as the letter of the law is complied with. This term is usually kept in the winter season. If a school is opened in the summer, it is a subscription or tuition school, and is not subject to legal supervision or regulation.*

This mode of supplying the deficiency of the public school is liable to many objections. If the legal term of the public school were extended to six or eight months, this objectionable class of private schools would

* The following letter from a school visitor will illustrate some of the evils resulting from this mode of conducting schools.

May 12, 1855.

To the Superintendent of Common Schools.

"Sir: I have been instructed by the Board of School Visitors in this society, to inquire of you, whether such districts as may have used up their public money for the winter school, have the right to establish a summer school, to be kept in the same house, under the same regulations as the winter school, and yet refuse to have their teacher examined, on the ground that the law does not require it, there being no public money. We wish to know whether their claim is

cease to exist. Has not the time arrived, when every child in Connecticut, in whatever section of the State, whether in the city or in the smallest and poorest districts, shall be guarantied more than four months' schooling in the year?

Let it be remembered, that this feature of our law which fixes the minimum length of the public schools at four months, is no part of the ancient policy of the State. It was adopted in the darkest period of our educational history. Previously to the time when the operation of the School Fund began to eat out the vitality of the Connecticut system of Common schools, a more liberal policy prevailed. From the very origin of our system of common schools, down to the commencement of the present century, every town having seventy householders and upwards, and every ecclesiastical society having that number of families, was obliged to maintain at least one good school for *eleven months in the year*, taught by a master of sufficient and suitable qualifications; and *every* town and society of less than seventy families, was bound to keep a good school for at least *one-half of each year*. In the revised and consolidated school law enacted in 1799, this salutary provision was unfortunately omitted. No time being prescribed for keeping the schools, they were soon continued only just long enough to expend the money derived from the public and society funds, and then closed as public schools. Under this system, the character of the schools rapidly degenerated from their former excellence. To check this downward tendency, the schools were required to be kept open at least four months. This was the first step towards regaining the old high standard. It is now high time to take another step in the same direction. Let each district be required to keep a school *six months* each year, instead of four, and new life will be at once infused into our schools.

SUPPORT OF SCHOOLS.

The revenue of the School Fund for the year ending March 31, 1855, was \$144,137.73. The amount distributed to the societies, was \$129,038.75, giving to each child on the *pro rata* distribution, \$1.25. Half

well founded. We have been endeavoring for two or three years past, to raise the standard of our common schools in this society, and have found it necessary to reject many teachers. The district committee have in many cases, resorted to the above plea to avoid bringing their teachers before the committee, and in some cases, have employed the same teachers who had previously been rejected by the committee. We wish to know whether this can be done without violating, *at least the intention of the law*. If it can, we think it high time that it was altered or repealed, as whatever progress may have been made in the winter, may be counteracted by a retrograde movement in the summer."

of the interest on the Town Deposit Fund is required by law to be appropriated to school purposes. This amounts to about \$25,000, giving about 25 cents to each child. The avails of the one per cent. tax, will amount to \$50,000, or \$60,000, yielding to each child not far from 50 cents. These are the only means provided by law for the support of schools. The proceeds of these three sources of revenue united, give to each child \$2.00, and perhaps a little more.

School societies and districts are *authorized* to tax property without limitation, for the support of schools, but as yet, the number which avail themselves of this privilege, is comparatively small. It is, however, highly gratifying to observe that public sentiment is rapidly becoming more favorable to this mode of supporting schools. The more intelligent and progressive class in the community, having become thoroughly convinced that the public money is insufficient for the maintenance of an efficient system of schools, look with favor upon every movement which has for its object the increase of the school money by taxation upon property. Regarding the proper education of all the people as a public blessing, by which property, life, and the peace of society are secured, they believe that the property of the State should educate the children of the State, and that for the purpose of instruction, every man should be held subject to taxation in proportion to his property, whether he himself have or have not children to be educated. The act of the last session, requiring towns to raise a one per cent. tax for school purposes, was but the embodiment, in the form of law, of the public sentiment on this subject, and its importance consists in the recognition of the great principle on which the theory of public education is based, rather than in the amount of immediate aid which it contributes to the support of schools. It is for the wisdom of the Legislature to decide whether the interests of our public schools demand an immediate increase of the amount of this property tax for education. It is for the intelligent representatives of the people to decide whether a more liberal provision for the support of schools is needed or not. If additional means are needed, why delay the supply? The State has abundant wealth, with no debt, and a full treasury. Connecticut is probably the wealthiest State in the Union, in proportion to her population. The valuation of the State is \$203,739,831, which is at least, one-third below the actual value of the property. Assuming the real value of the property of the State to be \$300,000,000, a tax of *one mill on the dollar* would yield \$300,000, or \$3 to each person of school age. In the State of Ohio, the law makes it obligatory on the towns to raise *at least one mill and a half on the dollar*, for the support of

common schools. Such a tax in this State on the actual value of the property, would amount to \$450,000, or \$4.50 for each child of school age; and on the legal valuation, it would yield upward of \$300,000, or \$3 to each scholar.

Should we venture to adopt the Ohio standard of providing for popular education by taxation, and then, to the pecuniary means thus realized, add the revenue of our School Fund, most of the defects in our schools which are now the cause of complaint, would soon cease to exist. We should soon see a suitable and commodious school-house in every district; we could easily supply every district with a good library; we could keep a school open in every district at least eight months of the year; and what is still more important, being able to compete successfully with other States, as well as other professions, we could furnish every school with a competent teacher. And I can name no other improvement which would not follow naturally in the train of these.

To accomplish all this, would require only such a tax as the Ohio law imposes, or \$1.50 on \$1,000. The one per cent. tax on the grand list, is equivalent to only *three-tenths* of a mill on a dollar of the valuation, so that \$1,000 under our present law pays only *thirty-three and one-third cents*. This can not be burdensome to any one. The most intelligent people regard it as a wise investment, and many, doubtless, would be glad to increase it, believing that "taxes raised for purposes of public education are like vapors, which rise only to descend again in fertilizing showers, to bless and beautify the land beneath."

THE CONNECTICUT COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

This publication is issued monthly, in pamphlet form, and is devoted exclusively to the promotion of the interests of popular education. It is conducted by a board of editors appointed by the State Teachers' Association. At the last session a grant of \$250 was made to the Association to defray the expense of sending the Journal, during the year, to the acting school visitor of each school society, and thus make this educational publication a channel of communication from this department to the officers of the societies. The benefits which were anticipated from this measure have been fully realized. Indeed, they have proved much greater than was expected. Through this medium an edition of the School Laws as compiled and prepared in accordance with a resolution of the Legislature, passed at the last session, was circulated.

among the school visitors, and a mass of information has been disseminated with reference to the best plans of organizing, instructing and elevating the character of our schools.

If this publication could be made to reach each school district, as well as each school society, its influence for good would be increased fourfold. It would prove an efficient auxiliary to the Superintendent in the discharge of his duties, and put it in his power to accomplish a great amount of good, which would otherwise be impracticable.

The effect of sending, monthly, into every school district, a pamphlet containing the official decisions and opinions of the Superintendent, an account of the educational movements in the State, plans and descriptions of the best school-houses, discussions of topics connected with popular education, articles exhibiting the best methods of teaching and governing schools, together with notices of the current educational intelligence of the day;—the circulation of such a publication every month among the school officers of all the districts in the State, could not fail to infuse into the administration of our school system new life and vigor.

I would therefore commend to your consideration the expediency of placing in the hands of the Superintendent the means of effecting this object. As an inducement to adopt this measure, I can not cite the example of other States. But let this step be taken and we shall surely enjoy the satisfaction of furnishing a good example to be cited and followed by other States, and according to the wisdom of "the wisest of mankind," it is as well "*to create* good precedents as to *follow* them."

(*To be continued.*)

A NORMAL EXPEDITION.

The morning of the day had arrived, on which the pupils of the State Normal School were to be permitted to visit the city of Hartford, for the purpose of attending the meetings of the State Teachers' Association; and bright and early had we risen, with high anticipations of enjoying much during our short vacation. Disappointed indeed we were to find that the sky was hidden from view by dark, heavy clouds, which seemed to threaten a storm.

We were not, however, to leave until afternoon; and some, who were accustomed to look on the sunny side of life, went to their morning labors with hopeful faces, thinking that before the time of departure

should arrive, the clouds would disperse, and all Nature rejoice in the cheerful sunlight.

The hours of the morning rolled away, but the storm instead of abating, increased in violence; and some of us, poor timid creatures, were about to consider all our hopes blasted and give up in despair. But just at this crisis, one of our teachers arose and gave us some words of encouragement, which inspired us with more zeal and courage to battle with the *storms* of life, and *go to Hartford "rain or shine."* Accordingly, at 1½ o'clock, there were at the New Britain depot, about one hundred of the Normal pupils with their teachers, in readiness for any adventure. The whistle of the locomotive was soon heard, and the cars advanced toward us with becoming speed and dignity.

They were quickly filled and moved on, slowly and cautiously, as if they felt the worth of the burden they bore. But they went none too slowly for our accommodation, for we were enjoying a very merry, pleasant ride, and were soon enough in the city. But now what is to be done? It is some distance to our place of meeting, and it is still raining powerfully.

Some who had put their hands to the plough, were almost inclined to turn back; but the voice of one of our teachers was heard saying "Who is going to walk with me?" Surely, any of us would be glad to walk with him, or follow in his footsteps; and the response "I," "I," and "I," was heard from various quarters; and soon he was seen heading quite a regiment of ladies, while the *sick* and *wounded* staid behind to be brought in carriages.

I don't know but the gentlemen would have taken carriages, had they not been shamed by the example of the ladies; but following this example, they formed themselves into a battalion, and ere we were aware, were in advance of us. But we endeavored to be resigned to our fate, and be the faithful followers of our illustrious predecessors.

It must have been a very amusing sight to the lookers on, to have seen us marching with all the dignity of an army, with dresses wet and muddy, umbrellas turning inside out, &c. However, we enjoyed it nicely, and soon had reached our place of destination.

After listening to an exceedingly interesting lecture delivered by Pro. Goodrich of Yale College, we were distributed among the families of the Reverends, Doctors, Professors, Judges, Poets, School Committees, &c., where we found kind friends, pleasant homes, and hospitable entertainment.

On the evening of Tuesday, a lecture was delivered by the Hon. J. D. Philbrick, upon the important subject of the establishment of

Common School Libraries; which from its peculiarly happy and effective style, was fitted to carry conviction to the mind of every attentive hearer.

During the Sessions of the Association on Wednesday, animated discussions were conducted, by members of the Association and others, miscellaneous business transacted, &c.

In the evening, a lecture was delivered by Rev. E. B. Huntington, after which followed remarks that were of especial interest to the female portion of the assembly. The exercises were then closed by singing.

Thursday morning, the sky was clear, the sun shining brightly, and the birds singing sweetly, and we so happy, that we might well have joined in their merry songs. At an early hour, we repaired to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, where we witnessed the devotional exercises and the method of recitation.

The sight of more than two hundred who were unable to hear a sound, or speak a word—of one, not only deaf and dumb, but blind, was one which was full of interest, but exceedingly sad. At ten, we were obliged to leave, in order to be at the depot in time to take the cars for home. After a delightful ride, we reached New Britain depot in safety; and at 2 o'clock, P. M., found all, with one exception, in their seats in the school room, ready for work. During our absence we have prepared our machinery for working well, and raised a sufficient amount of steam to keep it in motion during the term.

THE TRUE PANACEA.

MR. EDITOR:

Countless are the moral ills which are prevalent in our whole world; every day presents to our view startling records of growing vices, and gross deeds of wickedness. The alarming facts of deliberate murders, daring robberies and reckless frauds being so often perpetrated in the midst of this enlightened land, should arouse the sentinels of the public peace to action and vigilance. Prompt and decisive measures should be taken in reply to the queries, how shall these enormities be checked—what remedy can be applied?

True, there are already numerous jails, prisons and instruments of death for the punishment of criminals; but, with no other cures, these will not have the desired effect on moral evils, any more than the thousands of quack medicines can remedy physical ills, when pure air and sunshine are excluded, and nature's laws continually disregarded.

Poverty and wretchedness tempt many to commit crime; then well-bestowed charity would sometimes check vice. Ignorance often leads to wickedness; then the diffusion of light, that the right way may be distinguished from the wrong, would be another preventive. Here we find a powerful plea for popular education, for giving knowledge to the masses. This would be a better, less expensive, and more sure remedy than alms-houses, or penitentiaries or Reform Schools. "Very well," some one says, "it is a fine thing to talk of all these poor, ignorant masses being educated; it is easy to lay out plans for enlightening the minds of those degraded criminals; all very pleasant to think of as you sit in your easy chair at home; but how will it be when you try to do it?"

We know the work will be difficult. There are superstitions, and prejudices, and bad influences of years to be encountered, and all hinder the extension of light. But the children are the mediums. They can have power over their parents' minds, and impart to them more instruction than others can, at first. Here is a work for teachers, to check and put away vice from our land by educating the children.

But will mere world-knowledge always and completely accomplish the desired object? Are all the vicious also ignorant? By no means? There are many highly educated, who end their days in prison or on the gallows; many, as forgers and swindlers, who, by aid of their education commit great crimes, proving that a "little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The infidel German philosophers lack not world-wisdom, neither did the brilliant Voltaire, Paine, or Hume; but how deplorable their influence, how sad the state of morals where their blighting power prevailed!

No; mere worldly knowledge is not the catholicon—"what profiteth a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Some ruling motive is needed to guide in the use of knowledge. Bible wisdom should be more taught; every heart should be filled with love to God and man; then would come the wished for moral renovation. How differently would our country appear! Religion is the key to the treasures of purity, peace and happiness. "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you."

While teachers train minds, let the Bible not be excluded from any of our schools. Give freely of its pure and living waters to the soul, for they will thoroughly cleanse from iniquity. Thus will be raised a strong and irresistible power against evil. Always disseminate the religion of Christ, for that is the True Panacea.

M. E. B.

WATERTOWN, Ct., April 28, 1855.

TEACHING.

MR. EDITOR!

There is no occupation in which a person can be engaged, where there lies spread before him a more extended field for usefulness than that of teaching. The time *has come* when the teacher is considered as being something more than a *mere machine*, and teaching of more importance than the mere source from which to gain *dollars* and *cents*; and the person who engages in the work more for the pecuniary benefit arising therefrom than from the love of it, ought not to be considered as being a fit person to engage in the education of youth. I do not, by any means, claim that the teacher ought not to receive any compensation for his labor, for "the laborer is always worthy of his hire." The *dollars* and *cents* should be a *secondary object* in the teacher's mind. The teacher's work is a *glorious work*, and as great and noble as any work on earth. Well may he tremble, as he enters upon the high, the noble calling of teaching. He is called to deal with *mind, immortal mind*; and the impressions which he may make upon the minds of his pupils may be as *lasting* as *eternity itself*. How often is the *faithful* teacher led to exclaim, as he looks about him and views the little group that spend the precious hours of youth with him; "who is sufficient for these things?" It sometimes seems a heartless, I had almost said a *hopeless* task, to attempt to teach; to guide these youthful minds in wisdom's ways, those ways of pleasantness and peace. How often, when the labors of the day are o'er, and the teacher is left alone to meditate upon the past, how often does the heart ache with sorrow on account of the trials and vexations he is called to encounter. Yet if he *does* sometimes feel disheartened, if the clouds do gather thick and heavy about his head, there are *many sun-beams* to cheer and gladden his heart. Fellow teacher, did you ever think how great an influence it lies in your power to exert, surrounded as you are, by a circle of little ones, whose minds are as plastic as the clay in the potter's hands? If kind, the teacher will soon gain the confidence and affections of his pupils. Kind words cost nothing. Even a kind look from the teacher will often dispel the tears and shadows from a child's face and light up every feature with joy and love. Take, for instance, the child who meets with nothing at home but cross looks and angry words, and is often beaten for the most *trifling offences* and let him but feel that in his teacher he has a *friend*, a *firm* and *faithful friend*, and his little heart will leap for joy, and every feature of his countenance will glow with plea-

sure, as with satchel in hand he wends his way to the cheerful school room. If, however, the teacher pursues an opposite course with the child, and frets and frowns at every trifling wrong the child may do, it may but be adding fuel, to the pent up fires already raging in his bosom, that will one day burst forth to blight and blacken the fair prospects of the youth. O fellow teacher! deal *gently* with the darling youth committed to your care; encourage them both by precept and example to press forward diligently and faithfully, until they shall become fitted to occupy stations of respect and usefulness among their fellows, and to act well their parts in the great drama of life.

*" Speak gently to the little child,
So guileless and so free,
Who, with a trustful, loving heart,
Puts confidence in thee.
If on that brow there rests a cloud,
However light it be,
Speak loving words, and let him feel,
He has a friend in thee."*

E. L. J.

NEWTOWN, Ct.

EXTRACT.

At what Age should Instruction in Vocal Music commence?

A child should be trained to tones, or musical sounds, as he is to words, from early infancy. He should be taught, first, to listen to tones, either vocal or instrumental, or both, and afterwards to produce tones. The most simple little melodies, chaste and beautiful, united to pure and appropriate words in poetic form, should be taught by the pattern of the mother's or teacher's voice; or, as we often express it, by rote. If this is successfully continued until the child is eight years old, he will by that time sing as readily, as easily, and with as much accuracy, as he speaks; and then he may commence learning to read music; or may acquire a practical knowledge of the musical signs, or of notation. In the mean time, much attention should be given to taste, both in respect to the delivery of tones and of words. That which is usually called expression should receive careful attention from the first lessons of childhood. Care must be taken to treat the voice according to the physical strength of the pupil, but there should be a regular daily practice. The child should never sing when fatigued, or immediately after

eating. In short, the voice should be used under the guidance of common-sense, with the addition of a little physiological experience, so as to avoid too much effort, by any attempts to force it up or down. At the age of 15 or 16, the voice changes; when the change has passed, the vocal exercises may be gradually taxed more severely; if the pupil has extraordinary talent, or a remarkably fine voice, and especially if there be an intention to become a professional vocalist, or public singer, now is the time to aim more directly at the full development of the vocal powers. Two or three years of close application will now do much for the pupil, so that, at the age of about 20, a young lady may be, in the professional sense, a singer. If, however, the profession of a singer is not intended, a year devoted to vocal cultivation (after the previous juvenile training mentioned above,) will be quite sufficient for all the domestic and social purposes of song.

It is a very common error to suppose that a child will be injured by the use of her voice in singing; it is just as reasonable to say that she will injure her eyes by looking, or her limbs by walking, or especially by dancing. There is no danger in the use of the voice in singing at any time, from four years of age up to full growth, provided the condition of the child be taken into consideration, and her efforts are always kept within the bounds of prudence, or adapted to the health, strength, etc., of the pupil. An important consideration in favor of teaching vocal music to misses is this; it prepares them for the piano-forte. No one ought ever to commence the piano-forte unless she has acquired a knowledge of the musical characters previously, by attending a singing-school or class-instructions, so as to be able to read easy music readily at sight; or, if it be desired, in particular cases, to commence the piano-forte at an early age, the two things should be carried on simultaneously. We do not mean, however, to say that if it be desirable to teach a child the instrument, *without reference to cost*, it may not be well done without the previous knowledge of notation; yet there are things in music, as, for example, *time*, which can not be so well taught individually as in classes. On the other hand, it is true that class-instruction, either in vocal or instrumental music, is not sufficient for one who desires to excel; it prepares the way, but individual instruction must follow. On the whole, the idea that it will injure a child to sing, is a foolish one; we might with just as much propriety say that it will injure a child to laugh. But as, in extreme cases, children have been injured by severe laughing, or by severe and protracted physical exercise in playing, so one may injure her voice by an intemperate use of it. Most certain it is, that except in extraordinary

eases, if one does not commence singing in childhood, she will never do much afterward. If one has not been taught to use her voice freely in singing while yet a child, she will not, in all probability, ever acquire much control of her vocal organs.

SPELLING.

MR. EDITOR:

Is it not true that orthography is either sadly neglected or but imperfectly or erroneously attended to in many of our schools? If we may judge from the great amount of bad spelling among professedly educated men, certainly there is defect or wrong somewhere. We recently saw posted up, in a very conspicuous place, and within a day's ride of the capitals of Connecticut, a written advertisement of a *professional* man in which there were upwards of *forty* words misspelt, and some of them sadly so. The writer, however, was not a professed teacher, but he did lay claim to great skill in extracting roots and manufacturing artificial helps to articulate and masticate. Perhaps we were wrong, but we could hardly repress the thought that teeth inserted by such a man, would, almost as a matter of course, cause the wearer of them to spell badly.

But we are digressing from our subject. Why is there so much miserable spelling in the community? We answer, first, it is not properly and thoroughly taught in our primary and intermediate schools, and is in schools of a higher grade much neglected or treated as a very unimportant branch, which may at any time be omitted or considered as of secondary importance. On the best mode of teaching orthography, there is quite a discrepancy of opinion, even among good teachers. Some denounce the usual spelling book columns as perfectly nonsensical; and contend strongly for written exercises in spelling; while others are equally tenacious of the column method and opposed to the written one. Now we think the true method is, the union of the oral and the written. We propose now to give two or three brief hints on the method of teaching this branch, and will add more in a future communication.

First. Spelling should receive very early and particular attention. The child should be made to feel, from the outset, the importance of knowing how to spell every word he utters. Teachers in our primary and intermediate schools should give regular lessons, to be studied and recited from the spelling book. In addition to this, the child's attention should be called to the spelling of the more difficult words in every

reading lesson. He may be required to spell these orally, and he will esteem it quite a privilege to be allowed to write or print them upon the black board, or upon his slate. This will serve to amuse him, occupy his time, and aid him in learning this important branch.

Secondly. The teacher should be careful to pronounce all words distinctly, and just as they would be spoken by a good reader or speaker. Teachers sometimes render a spelling exercise worse than useless, by giving undue emphasis to particular syllables. Let the word be properly pronounced by the teacher, once only, and repeated by the pupil before he spells. It is a very good plan for the whole class, in concert, to pronounce a word after the teacher, and then have some one called upon to spell it. This will tend to secure the attention of the whole class.

Thirdly. It should be the aim of the teacher to excite in the pupils an interest in the exercise. This is all important; and the skilful teacher will readily devise means and plans for awakening and procuring an interest. It will be well for them to watch for the errors of their classmates, and raise a hand as an indication that they think a word has been misspelt. The judicious teacher can see that this can be done and received in the right spirit.

It will be found interesting and useful, at the close of every stated lesson, to allow each pupil to name some word for the others to spell. As soon as these have been spelled, let the teacher write them distinctly, in a column, on the blackboard, there to remain for a season. This will be found very serviceable.

Fourthly. Teachers should never allow their pupils to guess in spelling. As the word should be pronounced but once, so there should be but one attempt to spell. A little right training in this particular, will prove of real and permanent service.

Fifthly. Pupils should not only be required to pronounce each word before spelling, but also to pronounce the syllables as they are spelt. If the teacher will, from the outset, insist upon having all this work done properly and accurately, it will prove of great benefit, not only in relation to this, but it will also have a favorable influence on other branches. Let the rule be, here and in every thing, to have accurate and finished work.

M.

That education which will secure to the future, the civilization of the past and present, is what the country really needs.—*Professor Whewell.*

NEW EDUCATIONAL ACT.

An Act in addition to and in Alteration of An Act concerning Education.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened :

Sec. 1. The enumeration of children between the ages of four and sixteen years, required by law to be made by the district committees, in the several school societies in this State, shall be made and returned to the school society committee on or before the 20th day of January, in each year, and for failure to make the enumeration and return aforesaid, by the time specified, said committee shall forfeit and pay to the treasurer of the State, the sum of five dollars for the benefit of the school fund.

Sec. 2. The committee of each school society in this State, shall make return of the enumeration of the children belonging to the society, to the comptroller, on or before the first day of February in each year, and for failure to make said return within the time specified, said committee shall forfeit and pay to the treasurer of this State, the sum of ten dollars, for the benefit of the school fund.

Sec. 3. The income of the school fund shall be annually divided to the several school societies in the State, *pro rata*, according to the number of children enumerated in said societies; *provided*, that no district shall be entitled to a dividend, unless a legal school shall have been kept therein for six months during the year ending on the 28th day of February; but the school society may draw the dividend for so many children belonging to said district, as have attended school for six months in adjoining districts, and for no other.

Sec. 4. Whenever the amount drawn from the school fund by any school district, shall be less than thirty-five dollars, it shall be the duty of the selectmen and town clerk to appropriate from the amount raised by said town for the purpose of education, a sum sufficient to make the amount equal to thirty-five dollars.

Sec. 5. The year for all school purposes shall end on the 28th day of February, in lieu of the 31st day of March.

Sec. 6. No district shall be divided, if by reason of such division the number of children, belonging to either district, shall be less than forty, without application to the General Assembly; and no withdrawal by any person from any district shall be allowed, unless notice be given to the clerk of the district from which such persons intend to withdraw.

Sec. 7. The forfeitures specified in the first and second sections of this act, shall be sued for and collected by the treasurer in an action on this statute.

Sec. 8. All acts inconsistent with the foregoing are hereby repealed.

Approved June 29, 1855.

HASTE NOT—REST NOT.

BY GOETHE.

Without haste ! without rest !
Bind the motto to thy breast !
Bear it with thee as a spell ;
Storm or sunshine, guard it well !
Heed not flowers that round thee bloom,
Bear it onward to the tomb !

Haste not—let no thoughtless deed
Mar for e'er the spirit's speed ;
Ponder well and know the right,
Onward then, with all thy might ;
Haste not—years can ne'er atone
For one reckless action done !

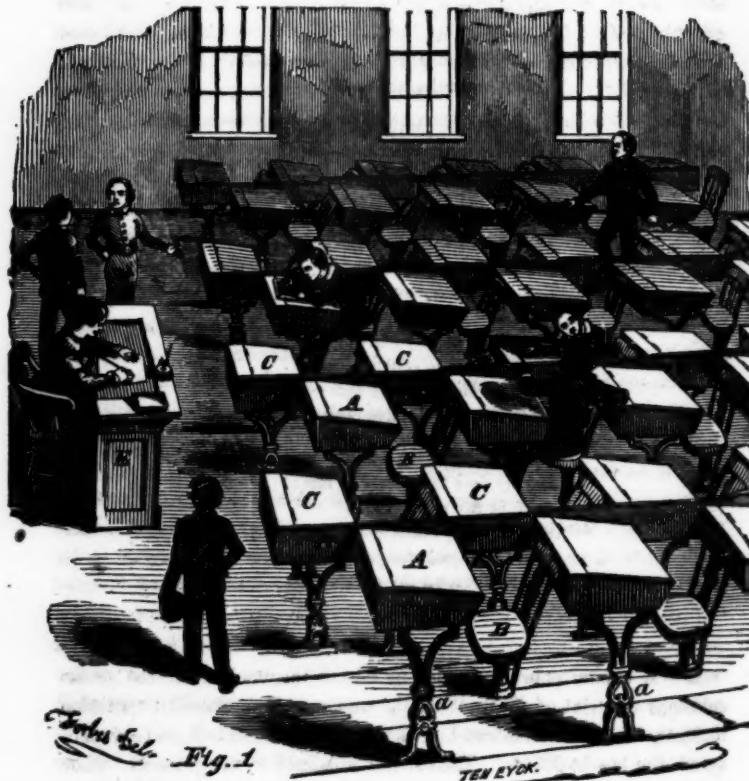
Rest not ! life is sweeping by,
Do and dare before you die ;
Something mighty and sublime
Leave behind to conquer time ;
Glorious 'tis to live for aye
When these forms have passed away.

Haste not ! rest not ! calmly wait,
Meekly bear the storms of fate ;
Duty be thy polar guide—
Do the *right*, whate'er betide !
Haste not—rest not—conflicts past,
God shall crown thy work at last.

¶ A capital point was made by one of the counsel for the prosecution at the trial of Matt. Ward, in answer to Tom Marshall's allusion to Matt. Ward's travels and his visit to Mount Sinai, where God delivered the law to Moses. The counsel wondered if the prisoner, when amidst the sublimities of Sinai, where he indulged in a profusion of sacred sentiments, had ever read in the Decalogue, "*Thou shalt not kill.*"

NEW ARRANGEMENT FOR SCHOOL DESKS.

We give below a new plan for seating scholars, for which the inventor, Mr. Woodcock, of New Hampshire, has taken out a patent. Mr. Woodcock's description, together with the illustrative cut, will sufficiently explain the plan, and we see no good reason why the advantages claimed by him may not be secured by his novel arrangement of chairs and desks. Without feeling fully prepared for an unqualified expression of our own, we have no hesitation in calling the attention of our readers to the subject as one deserving of consideration.



"Whereas, I Virgil Woodcock, of Swanzey, County of Cheshire and State of New Hampshire, have invented a new and useful improvement

in the arrangement of School Desks and Seats in School Rooms, and have received Letters Patent from the United States for the term of fourteen years from the 6th day of March, 1855, I hereby solicit the attention of all interested in the cause of education throughout these United States.

My claim embraces the *Diagonal Arrangement* of the desks and chairs, and possesses great and signal advantages over any other arrangement, and gives to every scholar a separate desk and chair, and the full control of his books and writing; it releases every one from any interference with another, and gives to all the privilege of inhaling the pure air without taking it second handed from the one sitting near him, as by the old method of double desks. So great is the saving in room, that hereafter all double desks may be entirely dispensed with, and every scholar provided with single desk and chair. By this arrangement, as many scholars can be seated at single desks as at double ones, and they will only occupy the same floor room. There is also a great gain over single desks as arranged in the common way in schools by seating forty-eight scholars in the same space as thirty-six are commonly seated, (a gain of one-fourth, and so in proportion for a greater or less number.) The desks and chairs are *arranged diagonally* on the floor so that no one scholar can see the face of another without one of the two being at right or left half face. When the school is called to procession, all can rise at once and step into files in the aisles without coming in contact with one another. Scholars are more directly in view of the teacher, and can therefore be kept in better order, which greatly diminishes the labor of the teacher.

The usual method of arranging single desks in school rooms is to place them in independent rows, with an isle between each row. This method of seating requires so large a room to seat the number of scholars required, that but few feel able to erect houses of such magnitude as is required for said arrangement, therefore they are required to use double desks. By my new arrangement it is not necessary to increase the size of the room beyond what is required to seat with double desks, and also gives all those important advantages gained by the *diagonal arrangement*. The annexed engraving is a perspective view of my new arrangement—two rows of single desks are combined together with a connecting board between them;—the under edge of the board is even with the under side of the desks and neatly graduated on the top to conform to the shape of the upper surface of the desk, and to correspond to the different heights of the desks as they are graduated for large or small scholars.

A, A, and C, C, are shown connected to each partition board D. The teacher's desk is represented at E—B the chairs of the scholars at their desks—a, a, are the desk standards. Each scholar's desk is arranged opposite the seat space of the opposite scholar, thus completely separating them and preventing playing and whispering except by the agonizing method of wriggling their heads as shown by the attempt of the two little fellows in the middle of the room. When thus arranged and combined, one end of each desk is fastened to the connecting board with wood screws, the end of one desk to one side of the board and the end of the next to the other side, alternately. In connecting them in this manner, the iron standards on which the desks are mounted are much lighter than are required where they stand independently by themselves, and it is not necessary to place a standard under each end of every desk, as every other desk will be supported at the connecting end by the connecting board, and is much more convenient in sweeping, and fewer and smaller obstructions for the feet. If arranged without the connecting board, a standard must be placed under each end of every desk, the same as are used when desks are placed in independent rows.

I have seated one house with my improved plan, at Bellows Falls, Vermont. Said house was seated about the middle of January last, with 235 single desks and chairs. The desks and chairs I furnished from the manufactory of Joseph L. Ross, of Boston. The desks are made of cherry, mounted on cast iron standards, of which I have a new set of beautiful patterns. The chairs are made of hard wood and mounted on a cast iron bedstead, the upper end of which is screwed to the chair seat, and the lower end screwed to the floor. The centre of the chair back extends to and connects with the lower end of the pedestal, which greatly diminishes the danger of breaking off at that part which is usually the weakest. The desk standards are also screwed to the underside of the desks and to the floor.

Town and District rights will be sold, and school furniture of every description furnished or made to order by applying to the patentee by letter or otherwise. All information given with regard to seating school-rooms and the graduation of schools according to the age and number of scholars; the number of desks in a room, &c., on receiving an outline of a plan of the room, with the situation of the doors, &c."

“ Let a child's first lesson be obedience, and the second may be what thou wilt.—*Fuller.*

"MIND YOUR STOPS!"

Teachers have frequent occasion to say to their pupils, when reading, "mind your stops;" and yet, we are sorry to say, many teachers and others often write as though there were no stops to be "minded." There once lived an eccentric character, self-styled Lord Timothy Dexter. He was very rich and as ignorant as he was rich. This same Lord Timothy "took it into his head" that he might add to his fame by printing a book, and not knowing the proper rules for punctuation, he had the last two pages entirely covered with periods, colons, commas, &c., preceded by the request, that the "knowing ones" would pepper and salt to suit their taste.

But some of our more modern letter writers, and even some of our teachers, are less provident, inasmuch as they furnish no stops of any kind or in any way; though their writings often cause the reader to stop in order to puzzle out their meaning.

Wrong or deficient punctuation often causes a sentence to read, or to be read, very queerly, as in the case we will name.

A certain company, in a State north of Mason & Dixon's line, desired to obtain permission of the legislature to plant oysters in a certain bay or stream. It was necessary that their petition should be entered in the office of Secretary of State. It was introduced, very modestly, with the request that the said company "*might be permitted to enter their petition for a law relating to the planting of oysters in the Secretary's office, any rule or law to the contrary notwithstanding.*"

Now, Mr. Editor, we may, naturally enough, infer that the wish of the aforesaid company is to plant oysters in the Secretary's office. As a friend of oysters, I should strongly oppose this. Why, unless that Secretary and his clerks are wholly unlike most men, similarly situated, it would be sure destruction to all oysters that might be planted within said office. *They would go, but not grow;* while the aforesaid Secretary and his clerks would be more inclined to *grow than go.* If, however, it shall be provided to plant the bivalves in the said office, we would respectfully suggest that the Secretary and his clerks be allowed a certain salary and board, and that they take their meals (or oysters) within the office.

Teachers! see that you mind your stops, as well for your own sake as for the oysters' sake and the reader's sake. O.

FOURTH OF JULY AT THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

"The Fourth was celebrated in New Britain by very pleasant and interesting exercises in the North Hall of the Normal School, consisting of appropriate declamations, select readings, music by the Normal Choir and Glee Class, etc. The declamations were by Messrs. Upson, Paddock, J. Marshall Guion, and Dutton, and the readings by Misses J. L. Thomas, M. J. Wood, and S. A. Morse—and are spoken of as having been appropriate and highly creditable to the parties. The young ladies, especially, showed themselves to be excellent readers and possessed of a rare talent to appreciate the genius and scope of their selections. They were listened to with interest by the spectators.

After an entertainment of this kind for the space of two hours, appropriate sentiments were read and speeches made by a number of gentlemen present, including members of the clerical, medical, and legal professions. At the close of the speaking, Mr. Philbrick, the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Connecticut, who presided on this occasion, made a few remarks in relation to the general claims of education, and alluded to the unwillingness of the State to grant appropriations for several objects of importance to the advancement of the common cause. He was happy, however, to say, that at the very last hour of the late session of the General Assembly an appropriation of \$1,000 had been made for apparatus and a library for the benefit of the Normal School. This appropriation was owing not so much to the efforts of the regularly constituted Committee on Education, as to the timely labors of a gentleman then and there present—Mr. MERRIMAN, of New Britain, the Senator from the First District. When this fact was made known yesterday to the members of the Normal School, said Mr. P., they unanimously desired to present to Mr. Merriman some token of their appreciation of his efforts. As a result, Mr. Philbrick in behalf of the School, and in a happy manner, presented to Mr. M. a beautiful and costly ring. It was an onyx-stone, the face presenting a white shield, elaborately carved; and the setting was in a massive ring of finest gold, richly chased. It came from the celebrated Jewelry Manufactory of Churchill, Stanley & Co., of New Britain.

On receiving the ring, Mr. Merriman, with manifest emotion, replied in some appropriate remarks, which we have not space to give. The affair passed off pleasantly to all concerned."

We take the above from the *Hartford Times*, and give below, an abstract of Mr. Merriman's remarks.

"In listening to your expressions of respect and regard for the very small service which it has fallen to my lot to assist in performing, my heart swells with the liveliest emotions. If I have been instrumental in obtaining an appropriation from the State for the benefit of this institution, the mere knowledge of the fact would be a sufficient reward. But now I feel more than rewarded in the expressions of your gratitude, and doubly so in receiving at your hands *this beautiful ring*. Be assured, that this is a memento which I shall treasure till the last sand in my hour glass of time. I shall value it more than money, and keep it as that which money cannot buy. It shall be to me as one of my household gods. I will hand it down to my children and children's children as a certificate of your approbation.

I beg you, Sir, and the members of this noble institution, to accept my unfeigned thanks for this kindly expression and this splendid token of your sincerity. It is my earnest wish that you may, each and all, here receive those blessings and gifts which are more valuable than gold and precious stones. I look upon the cause of education to which you are devoting your attention and talents in relation to our Republican institution, as the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all other causes. It has afforded me pleasure to be in the humblest manner instrumental in obtaining the small grant of One thousand Dollars. I wish it had been ten times as large, for I feel that no institution better deserves legislative patronage and encouragement.

But be not discouraged. The good old Commonwealth of Connecticut *must* and *will* unloose the purse strings and provide liberally for all your wants, and in return, I am sure, she will be most amply compensated by the fruits which ye shall produce for her benefit.

I assure you that in whatever capacity I am called upon to act with regard to education, it shall always receive my earnest and hearty support; and I pledge you that no opportunity for doing a good act for the benefit of the *Connecticut State Normal School* shall ever be disregarded or pass unimproved."

LEARN FROM EVERY ONE.

Sir Walter Scott gives us to understand, that he never met with any man, let his calling be what it might, even the most stupid fellow that ever rubbed down a horse, from whom he could not, by a few moments conversation, learn something which he did not know before, and which was valuable to him. This will account for the fact that he seemed to have an intuitive knowledge of every thing.

Resident Editor's Department.

WHAT IS DOING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS IN CONNECTICUT.

We need not remind our readers, that Mr. George Sherwood, the efficient Agent of the State Teachers' Association, is in the field. We have no doubt that his visits in different parts of the State will be productive of much good.

The following communication is the result of observations recently made in Litchfield County. Though there is rather more *shading* in the picture than suits our taste, the artist is not in fault, but the subject. Still we do not despair of old Litchfield County. We hope to have a great Institute there this Autumn.

"We have taken occasional opportunities to speak of the condition of the schools of Litchfield County, and had hoped that the worst features had been disclosed; but a recent visit in its north and north-western range of towns, has convinced us that there are other parts of the County which seem threatened with an intellectual dearth.

There is occasionally to be found a district where the energy and liberality of the people have prompted them to take a bold stand in favor of progress.

One of this character is located in a retired part of the town of Cornwall, where they have in process of erection a school house, which is in the hands of an efficient building committee, who feel desirous of having every arrangement made which is necessary for the comfort and convenience of the pupils, and the best interests of the district. The cost of the building will probably be from 1000 to \$1500; and it will accommodate thirty or forty pupils.

There are two or three other individual instances of betokened interest; but with few exceptions, the schools in this section of the County are in a deplorable condition. Not only are they out of the line of progress, but in many cases are sinking lower and lower.

In some instances, the supporting hand of the parents is almost entirely withdrawn from the public school. The people are generally willing to have a school kept a part of the year, but suppose if they can get a *cheap* teacher, that will suffice, and the school will take care of itself.

In a growing village on the line of the Housatonic Rail-Road, a dis-

trict has recently been divided, a new school house erected—destitute, at least, of some of the requisites of a good school, and a teacher employed at the expense of \$1.75 per week, without board. In this village there are four district school houses within a few minutes walk of each other, and the village possesses every facility that could be asked, for a good system of graded schools.

In the town of Sharon, where is found one of the most beautiful villages of Connecticut, support is given to several academies and private schools; but no fostering arm is thrown around the public schools; thus, much money is uselessly employed in educating the few while the mass are left unprovided for.

It is earnestly hoped that Litchfield County will soon wake up in reference to her educational interests, and that her intelligent citizens, at least, in every locality, will inquire whether the district schools are keeping pace with the other improvements that are going on around them."

G. S.

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

A very spirited meeting of this Association was held in Manchester the 11th of May. The Committee on School Terms and Vacations reported by Mr. Richards, recommending the taking of speedy measures to secure a greater uniformity in these, with the Annual Commencement of Dartmouth College as a basis of the same. The Committee on School Supervision reported by Mr. Tenney, in favor of employing a Superintendent for each town.

The action respecting the establishment of a State Normal School, shows that the teachers of the Granite State are behind those of no other State in spirit and enterprise. Mr. Richards reported in favor of such an institution. After an animated discussion of the subject, on motion of Mr. J. Tenney of Manchester, the following resolutions were passed unanimously :

1. *Resolved*, That it is expedient that a State Normal School of the general character reported by the committee, Mr. Richards, be created forthwith.

2. *Resolved*, That the State Teachers' Association will raise and pay for the support of a competent Board of Instruction of such a Normal School, the sum of \$2500 per year, for the term of five years, provided the State Legislature will make an appropriation for this purpose of a similar amount; and, provided further, that the entire management of such school shall be placed in a Board of Trustees, one half of whom

shall be selected by the State Board of Education, and the other half shall be chosen by the State Teachers' Association.

3. Resolved, That the next Legislature be memorialized to make an appropriation adequate to defray one half of the expense of suitable buildings, fixtures, and apparatus, for such a school, provided any city, town, or village, eligibly situated, shall raise and pay the other half of the cost of such buildings, fixtures, and appurtenances; and provided, further, that such buildings, &c., shall be wholly controlled by the Board of Management of the Normal School.

4. Resolved, That a Committee of Ten be appointed from each County, forthwith, on the part of this Association, to carry these resolutions into effect.

The following gentlemen, the foremost teachers in the State, were appointed on the Committee:

Rockingham Co.—Horace Webster. Hillsboro' Co.—Jonathan Tenney.

Strafford Co.—Henry E. Sawyer. Cheshire Co.—Asahel H. Bennett.

Carroll Co.—Benj. M. Mason. Sullivan Co.—Cyrus S. Richards.

Belknap Co.—King S. Hall. Grafton Co.—Edwin D. Sanborn.

Merrimack Co.—Geo. S. Barnes. Coos Co.—Daniel A. Bowe.

Of this Committee, Mr. Tenney was appointed Chairman. We shall look with interest for the results.

BOOKS FOR A TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

We receive frequent communications requesting information as to the best books to purchase for a teacher's library. It is one of the encouraging signs of the progress of the art of teaching, that such information is sought. All progressive, growing teachers, read on the subject of education. They seek such books and periodicals as contain the best methods of teaching. It is to be regretted that the stock of such publications in our tongue, is as yet quite limited. We find quite a full catalogue of educational and other works which a teacher should possess, contained in the "Teacher and Parent," a most excellent book for teachers, by Charles Northend, A. M., late Superintendent of the School of Danvers. It is published by A. S. Barnes & Co., New York.

Teachers would do well therefore, in commencing a library, to procure this volume first; not only because it is one of the best, if not the very best, for a young teacher, but because it tells what other books the teacher should procure, and where to find them. The publishers, on the receipt of \$1, will send a copy of the above work, by mail, *postage paid*, to any parent or teacher in the United States.

EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS.

The Annual Meeting of the AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION, will be held in the city of Bath, Me., on the 22d, 23d, and 24th of August.

The Vermont State Teachers' Association, will meet at St. Albans, on the 21st, 22d, and 23d August.

CONNECTICUT TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION.

The Directors of the Connecticut Teachers' Association, at their recent meeting, *Voted*, that the next Semi-Annual Meeting, be held in Bridgeport, on Monday and Tuesday, the 15th and 16th of October. A full programme will be published in the next number of the *Journal*.

J. W. TUCK, Sec.

New Britain, July 21, 1855.

The American Association for the Advancement of Education, will meet in the city of New York on the 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st August. Addresses by Messrs. Barnard, Bache, Potter, Felton, Proudfit, Tappan, Maury, Huntington, Anderson, and others.

To most of these gatherings, the fare on steamboats and rail roads will be half price.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

THE AMERICAN SPEAKER: being a Collection of pieces in Prose, Poetry, and Dialogue; By Charles Northend, A. M. Published by A. S. Barnes & Co., New York.

This work is valuable as an occasional reading book in families and schools, and especially is it adapted to the wants of such pupils as wish to find a pleasing collection for declamation.

It contains a variety for all, boys and girls, young and old.

Among the pieces are to be found—

Introductory Addresses for Exhibitions.

A Valedictory Address.

The Doctor and his Patient.

A way to "Raise the Wind;" and numerous others, serious, laughable, comic, and witty.

G. S.

A MANUAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY, from the remotest times to the overthrow of the Western Empire, A. D. 476, by Dr. LEONARD SCHMITZ, F. R. S. E., Rector of the High School of Edinburgh. With copious chronological tables. 8vo pp. 466. Published by Blanchard & Lea, Philadelphia.

The study of history is too often limited to that of a few nations, and not unfrequently is pursued without regarding the relations of these few to co-existent but inferior governments. Hence, the crude and disjointed notions which so generally prevail respecting men and nations in past ages. It is like the knowledge at present professed by such as always stay at home and never take the papers.

The above work seeks to remedy this too common error, by giving a complete view of all the nations and their mutual relations ; and at the same time is not so large as to discourage an attempt to read or study it.

The style is attractive, intermingling the dry detail of facts and dates with deeds and events, which not only add interest, but are the real value of all histories ; they show the character of the people and the age. It is on the right plan. The extensive chronological tables and the index of names of distinguished persons and places, are valuable features, and recommend it for a book of reference.

The book is handed us by Brockett, Hutchinson & Co., Hartford.

F.

TOWER'S ELEMENTS OF GRAMMAR, published by Daniel Burgess & Co., N. York, is a simple, easy guide for young explorers into the mysteries of English Literature ; and many such an one may have occasion to rejoice. But however many and plain the text books may be, we cannot think the young child will learn to speak or write well by studying a book. Those who disagree with us, will be likely to use Towers Elements.

F.

THE SHAKSPERIAN READER ; a collection of the most approved plays of Shakespeare ; carefully revised, with introductory and explanatory notes, for the use of classes and the family reading circle. By JOHN H. S. HOWS, professor of elocution in Columbia College. Published by D. Appleton & Co., 346 & 348 Broadway, New York.

This is a convenient duodecimo volume of about four hundred pages. The editor professes to present in it the essence of sixteen of the "great poet's" most approved dramas, in a thoroughly revised and expurgated text. Some of the worshipers of Shakespeare may be horror struck at the bare mention of such a profanation of their idol. We have no such scruples. If Shakspere cannot be read as whole in the school or in the family, then we say, carve out such parts as can be read. Such a work has undoubtedly been a desideratum in our stock of educational literature. The editor has supplied the want, and he has performed the delicate task with judgment and taste.

THE HUNDRED DIALOGUES, New and Original ; designed for reading and exhibition in Schools, Academies, and private Circles, by WILLIAM BENTLEY FOWLE, Author of Common School Speaker, &c., &c. Boston, published by Morris Colton, 120 Washington street.

We have examined this book and think it well worthy the notice of teachers and parents. It is quite valuable for teachers who wish to find a pleasing variety for exhibitions. It contains many excellent new pieces, as well as all the most approved old ones which are scattered up and down the multitude of readers and speakers now published.